

Allied leaders (left to right) Winston Churchill, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, and Joseph Stalin planned the final phase of World War II at Yalta (Feb. 4-11, 1945). Concessions granted in return for Soviet entry into the Pacific war prompted much criticism during the cold-war era. (U.S. Department of Defense)

Iwo Jima

Feb 1945

{ee'-woh jee'-muh}

Iwo Jima is the largest of three islands that make up Japan's Volcano group. Located about 1,210 km (750 mi) south of Tokyo, it has an area of 21 sq km (8 sq mi) and a maximum elevation, on Mount Suribachi, of 166 m (546 ft). About 1,000 Japanese live on the island. Volcanic in origin, Iwo Jima has soil suitable for growing sugarcane, making a sugar refining industry possible. Sulfur mining is a major activity.

Japan annexed the Volcano Islands in 1887 and used them as a major military base during World War II. In February 1945, U.S. Marines launched a costly battle to capture Iwo Jima; a photograph of the American flag being raised on Suribachi was the basis for the famous sculpture in Arlington, Va. The U.S. Navy controlled Iwo Jima until its return to Japan in 1968.

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17 July to 2 Aug 1945

Potsdam Conference

The Potsdam Conference, July 17 to Aug. 2, 1945, at Potsdam, Germany, was the final Allied summit meeting of WORLD WAR II. Delegations were led by U.S. President Harry S. TRUMAN, Soviet leader Joseph STALIN, and British Prime Minister Winston CHURCHILL, whose place was later taken by his successor, Clement ATTLEE. They dealt with issues arising from the defeat of Germany and the war against Japan.

The conference established machinery for drafting peace treaties with Italy and the minor Axis nations and solidified plans for the military occupation of Germany. It agreed upon German disarmament and the punishment of leading Nazis as war criminals. The USSR renewed a pledge to declare war against Japan.

Foreshadowing the COLD WAR, the USSR and the Western nations disagreed on several major issues—the amount of German reparations, the ultimate boundaries and political unification of Germany, the future governments of Eastern Europe, and Soviet demands in the Mediterranean region.

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